

## **Saturday 8th July 2017, East Devon Way Stage 3 – Hare and Hounds to Newton Poppleford with Penny and Paul Kurowski**

### **It's a dog's life**

Fifteen people, including two new walkers, plus George the dog got off the bus at the start of the walk at The Hare and Hounds, Putts Corner. After a quick safety briefing, we set off single file along a half mile stretch of road as cars whizzed by until we came to the start point of this stage of the East Devon Way (EDW). The sun was shining but it was a humid day particularly in Knapp Copse that, despite the recent dry spell, had a flowing stream. We stopped for lunch on the side of a hill with impressive cloud formations behind us.



From here there were expansive views overlooking Sand: an historic house and gardens; none of us had visited it but were interested in doing so – have a look at <http://www.sandsidbury.co.uk/> for information and opening times.



Further fine views looking down on Sidbury greeted us further on our way.

We had a steep descent through Buckley Plantation down a loose chert-filled path – David slid down but was uninjured. At the bottom of the path, we met a stile: Heather and Paul climbed over it, Jackie decided that she would go through the two bars, Heather and Paul encouraged her to go lower so that her rucksack would go under the top bar only to see the bar go up – it was hinged! With the top bar hinged back, the remaining 12 people and George had an easier time going over the stile!

We strolled into Sidbury: some went to purchase more drinks, some sat on a bench in the shade and some took the opportunity to look in St Giles Church which has a 7th century Saxon crypt, open every Thursday afternoon in summer when guided tours take place. As Anne had another appointment later in the day, she left us at this stage.



Near to Goosemoor Farm, a closed gate confronted us with many bullocks standing behind it blocking the way ahead. George was sent to the back of the group whilst the bravest led the way forward shooing the beasts ahead of us until they turned into a field – David and Penny closed a gate and tied it shut; further up the path another gate was made 'safe'.

Having ascended Beacon Hill, we needed a 10-minute stop to gaze over Harpford Common and Sidmouth to the sea.



George made the most of a water-filled bath (trough for cows) swimming twice whilst the rest of us looked on enviously! As we entered Harpford Wood, we were told that there was a frightened horse loose on the path ahead – Paul was told to go to the fore whilst others talked of horse-whisperers: we didn't see the horse. We descended into Harpford, passed the Grade II listed St Gregory the Great Church, crossed Harpford Bridge and back to the Recreation Ground in Newton Poppleford.

The 10-mile walk on the EDW was well sign posted in this direction except for the entry into Harpford Wood. As usual with dogs on a walk, George probably went twice as far as the rest of us ... 20 miles in that heat and humidity would have been too much!

Paul Kurowski